

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----047584 181717Z /47
O 181600Z MAR 78 ZFF-4
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 7259
USMISSION USUN NIACT IMMEDIATE
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AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV NIACT IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 3 DAMACUS 1521

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, UNSC PBOR IS LE SY XF
SUBJ: SOUTH LEBANON: PROPOSED UNSC ACTION ON MIDDLE EAST

REFS: A) STATE 068716 B) STATE 068560

SUMMARY: FONMIN KHADDAM SAYS SYRIA ACCEPTS ENTRY OF UN FORCE FOR
SOUTH LEBANON PROVIDED IT: A) PREVENTS ISRAELI AGGRESSION
AGAINST LEBANESE TERRITORY AS WELL AS ILLEGAL ARMED PRESENCE
IN BUFFER ZONE, B) DOES NOT SUBSTITUTE FOR AUTHORITY OF
LEBANESE STATE, C) IS TEMPORARY AND D) IS RESPONSIBLE
DIRECTLY TO UN SECRETARY GENERAL. ALTERNATIVES TO UN FORCE
WOULD BE LEBANESE ARMY (SYRIA'S PREFERENCE) OR SAUDI, UAE AND
SUDANESE CONTINGENTS FROM ADF. KHADDAM SAID THAT ANY PROCEDURE
MUST RESPECT SHTAURA AGREEMENT. IN ADDITION ISRAELI FORCES MUST
WITHDRAW IMMEDIATELY AND ISRAELI'S MILITARY OPERATION
BE CONDEMNED. KHADDAM IMPLIED SYRIAN READINESS TO
CONTROL FEDAYEEN OUTSIDE OF BUFFER ZONE BUT AVOIDED
MAKING THIS SPECIFIC. HE DID STATE THAT ILLEGAL
FORCES SHOULD BE KEPT OUT OF AREA SPECIFIED IN SHTAURA

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AGREEMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. MET WITH KHADDAM MORNING MARCH 18 TO
OPEN DIALOGUE ON SOUTH LEBANON SITUATION. AFTER PRESENTING
OUR ESTIMATE OF PRESENT SITUATION AND EXPLANATION OF WHAT
WE THINK MUST BE DONE I SAID THAT TO GET A UN FORCE INTO THE
SOUTH RAPIDLY COULD BEST BE ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH A

SINGLE UNSC RESOLUTION CONTAINING THE ELEMENTS OF WITHDRAWAL, INTEGRITY AND UN FORCES. SHOULD TWO SEPARATE RESOLUTIONS BE INTRODUCES, WE CONSIDER IT WILL BE FAR MORE DIFFICULT TO GET APPROVAL FOR A UN FORCE. KHADDAM INDICATED HE UNDERSTOOD LATER POINT BUT GAVE NO REACTION.

2. KHADDAM OBSERVED THAT SYRIA BELIEVES ISRAELI INVASION TO BDC PART AND PARCEL OF ISRAEL'S CONSTANT GOAL OF EXPANSION AND IN ATTEMPT TO CREATE CONDITIONS WHICH WILL PREVENT REALIZATION OF A JUST AND COMPREHENSIVE PEACE. ISRAEL MUST REALIZE THAT SHOULD THE MILITARY OPERATION CONTINUE IN SOUTH LEBANON AND THEY NOT WITHDRAW, THIS WILL CREATE CONDITIONS BEYOND THE POWER OF ANY PARTY TO CONTROL. IT IS INVALID FOR ISRAEL TO ARGUE THAT FEYADEEN OPERATIONS EXCUSE ITS OCCUPATION AND DISPLACEMENT OF CIVILIAN POPULATION IN LEBANON. SYRIA VIEWS THE SITUATION AS FOLLOWS:

- 1) ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL MUST BE CARRIED OUT IMMEDIATELY AND THE ISRAELI OPERATION CONDEMNED BECAUSE IT IS AGAINST THE SOVERIGNTY, INDEPENDENCE AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF LEBANON.
 - 2) SYRIA CONSIDERS LEBANESE FORCES TAKE OVER THE REGION AS SPECIFIED IN THE SHTAURA AGREEMENT.
 - 3) IF UNSC "RESORTS" (I.E. DECIDES ON) TO A UN OBSERVER FORCE, THE RESOLUTION SETTING UP THAT FORCE
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MUST BE BASED ON THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES: A) THERE IS TO BE A BUFFER FORCE BETWEEN ISRAEL AND LEBANON PREVENTING ISRAELI AGGRESSION AGAINST LEBANESE TERRITORY AS WELL AS PREVENTING ANY ILLEGAL ARMED PRESENCE IN THE BUFFER ZONE B) THE FORCE MUST NOT BE A SUBSTITUTE FOR THE AUTHORITY OF THE LEBANESE STATE NOR ATTEMPT TO EXERCISE THAT AUTHORITY; C) THE FORCE MUST BE TEMPORARY WITH ITS CONTINUATION LINKED TO THE SOVEREIGN DECISION-MAKING OF THE LEBANESE; D) THE FORCE MUST BE RESPONSIBLE DIRECTLY TO THE UN SECRETARY GENERAL.

3. KHADDAM EXPLAINED THAT SYRIA'S KEENNESS FOR THESE PRINCIPLES DERIVED FROM ITS CONVICTION THAT LEBANON MUST BE MADE TO FEEL THE NEED TO ASSUME ITS RESPONSIBILITIES AND SPEED UP CREATION OF A REGULAR ARMY. IF THE GOL FEELS THE UN FORCE WILL BE AN ADEQUATE SUBSTITUTE FOR THE LEBANESE ARMY, THIS WILL EFFECTIVELY DEPRIVE IT OF ANY INITIATIVE TO SPEED UP THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ITS OWN ARMED FORCES.

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 7260
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EXDIS

4. SAID TO FONMIN IS WISHED TO AVOID ANY MISUNDERSTANDING IN REPORTING TO WASHINGTON. DID I UNDERSTAND THAT SYRIA SEES NO SUBSTITUTE FOR A UN FORCE? KHADDAM REPLIED THAT THE BASIS ALTERNATIVE WOULD BE UTILIZATION OF LEBANESE REGULAR FORCES. A SECOND AND ALSO BETTER ALTERNATIVE THAN A UN OBSERVER FORCE WOULD BE UTILIZATION OF ADF ELEMENTS IN SOUTH LEBANON. WERE THIS ACCEPTED, THEN THE SUDANESE, SAUDI AND UAE ELEMENTS COULD BE INSERTED IN THE AREA AS DELIMITED BY THE SHTAURA AGREEMENT TO SECURE ITS IMPLEMENTATION.

5. I ASKED IF IN THE IMMEDIATE CONTEXT OF UNSC CONSIDERATION WHETHER SYRIA AND/OR LEBANON WOULD OPPOSE INSERTION OF A UN FORCE. KHADDAM REPLIED THAT THE OVERRIDING PRINCIPLE IS THAT GOL MUST PRACTICE ITS SOVEREIGNTY IN THE SOUTH. THE LEBANESE FORCES EVEN NOW AVAILABLE TO SARKIS COULD ACCOMPLISH THIS. "HOWEVER, SHOULD UNSC CONSIDER USE OF A UN OBSERVER FORCE THEN OUR APPROVAL WILL BE LINKED TO THE ELEMENTS I HAVE ALREADY INDICATED" (PARA 2 ABOVE). KHADDAM UNDERSTOOD FROM TALKS WITH SARKIS YESTERDAY IN SECRET

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BEIRUT THAT HE HAS THREE BRIGADES TOTALLING SOME 6-7 THOUSAND MEN ON WHICH HE CAN DEPEND. HOWEVER, SARKIS SAID THAT HE DESIRED A UN FORCE, PROVIDED IT WOULD BE

TEMPORARY AND NOT USURP THE AUTHORITY OF THE LEBANESE STATE. HE ALSO SPOKE OF HIS DESIRE THAT THIS BE A DISENGAGEMENT FORCE WHICH WOULD PREVENT ILLEGAL ARMED PRESENCE AND FINALLY THAT HE, SARKIS, WOULD BE ABLE TO REPLACE THE UN FORCE AS RAPIDLY AS PERMITTED BY THE GROWTH AND DEPLOYMENT IN THE SOUTH OF THE LEBANESE ARMY. SARKIS HAD EMPHASIZED TO KHADDAM THE GREATEST PROBLEM WITH WHICH HE IS COPING IS DISPLACEMENT OF SOME 200 THOUSAND REFUGEES IN BEIRUT.

6. KHADDAM THEN STATED THAT SYRIA ALSO CONSIDERS IT ESSENTIAL TO TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION RESPECT OF EXISTING GOL-PLO AGREEMENTS "BECAUSE ANY ACTION CANCELLING THOSE ARRANGEMENTS WOULD HAVE NEGATIVE REPERCUSSIONS ON THE OVERALL AREA SITUATION." FOR THIS REASON HE SPECIFICALLY HOPED THE USG WOULD UPHOLD THE SHTAURA AGREEMENT. REPLIED WE WOULD HAVE BEEN HAPPY TO SEE SHTAURA FULLY APPLIED LAST FALL. KHADDAM RESPONDED THAT ITS IMPLEMENTATION HAD BEEN RENDERED IMPOSSIBLE BY SADAT'S VISIT TO JERUSALEM AND SUBSEQUENT EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI TALKS. I NOTED THERE HAD BEEN MANY OTHER AGREEMENTS BETWEEN PLO-GOL, SEVERAL OF WHICH HAD NEVER EVEN BEEN PUBLISHED. IN OUR OPINION, ONE OF THE MOST CRITICAL QUESTIONS WAS WHETHER THE PALESTINIAN SIDE WILL INSIST ON CONTINUANCE OF ITS FREEDOM TO OPERATE ACROSS THE AREA UNDER UN CONTROL BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER THE UN PRESENCE WAS REPLACED BY THE LEBANESE REGULAR FORCES. KHADDAM REFERRED TO "A GOL-PALESTINIAN AGREEMENT WHICH WAS DISCUSSED DIRECTLY BETWEEN THE LEBANESE AND THE PALESTINIANS." HE DID NOT HAVE THE DETAILS OF THE TEXT. (SIC). "THE PRESENCE, ON THE OTHER HAND, SECRET

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OF UN OBSERVERS AND/OR THE LEBANESE ARMY MAY CONSTITUTE A GUARANTEE THAT ILLEGAL ARMED FORCES WILL BE KEPT OUT OF THE AREA AS DELIMITED IN THE SHTAURA AGREEMENT." THIS WOULD BE EQUALLY APPLICABLE AFTER THE LEBANESE ARMY HAS REPLACED THE UN FORCES.

7. CONTINUING, KHADDAM EMPHASIZED THAT FEYADEEN ACTIVITIES MUST NOT BECOME AN EXCUSE FOR NON-CONDEMNATION OF ISRAELI OPERATIONS AND NON-RESTORATION OF THE GOL'S LEGITIMATE AUTHORITY. HE WISHED TO STRESS THIS POINT SINCE THE FEYADEEN INCIDENT NORTH OF TEL AVIV WAS INITIATED FROM THE OCEAN AND FROM AN AREA BEYOND THAT DELIMITED FOR NON-FEYADEEN ACTIVITY BY THE SHTARUA AGREEMENT. HE THEN AFFIRMED THAT THE BEST GUARANTEE FEYADEEN OPERATIONS WILL NOT RECUR IS TO ATTAIN A JUST AND COMPREHENSIVE PEACE INCLUDING A SOLUTION OF THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM. AT ANY RATE, HE CONCLUDED, THESE MATTERS MAY BE DISCUSSED BETWEEN THE GOL AND PLO.

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 7261
USMISSION USUN NIACT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT NIACT IMMEDIATE
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EXDIS

8. I SAID FONMIN SHOULD HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THERE WAS
ANY AMERICAN INTENTION TO INHIBIT THE GOL FROM
ASSERTING IST SOVEREIGN AUTHORITY IN THE SOUTH AS QUICKLY
AS POSSIBLE CONTINUATION OF THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION
WE KEW WAS VERY DANGEROUS AND HAD AREA-WIDE IMPLICATIONS
FOR PEACE PROCESS BUT I WANTED AN ASNWER TO ONE
SIMPLE QUESTION. "ARE YOU SAYING THAT FOR BOTH
BEIRUT AND DAMASCUS FEDAYEEN OPERATIONS ARE
CONSIDERED ILLEGAL ACROSS AS WELL AS IN THE PROPOSED BUFFER
ZONE?" KHADDAM REPLIED THEY WOULD BE CONSIDERED
ILLEGAL IN THE BUFFER ZONE AS DELIMITED BY THE SHTAURA
AGREEMENT. DEDAYEEN FORCES SHOULD NOT BE IN THAT AREA.
BUT WHO, I PURSUED, WOULD PREVENT THE FIRING OF
ROCKEST AND ARTILLERY SHELLS ACROSS THE ZONE
AND IS THIS TYPE OF ACTIVITY CONSIDERED ILLEGAL?
KHADDAM SAID I WAS PUTTING TECHNICAL
QUESTIONS TO HIM CONCERNING MISSILE CAPABILITIES WHICH HE
COULD NOT ANSWER. SOME MISSILES HAVE RANGES
UP TO 500 KILOMETERS. WUCH MISSILES MAY NOT BE IN
FEYADEEN HANDS TODAY, BUT THEY MAY GET THEM TOMORROW.

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9. THEN, I ASKED, WHO IS RESPONSIBLE TO CONTROL FEDAYEEN?
THE FACT WAS ONLY THE LEBANESE AND SYRIAN LEADERSHIPS COULD
EXERT SUCH CONTROL OVER ARAFAT AND THE PLO. KHADDAM REPLIED
INDIRECTLY BY OBSERVING THAT FOR THE PAST FOUR YEARS UNDOF
HAD BEEN PRESENT IN SYRIA WATHCING THE LAND FORCES AND PREVENTING
TANKS FROM MOVING. BUT UNDOF CANNOT PREVENT ISRAELIS AND
SYRIANS FROM FIRING MISSILES AT ONE ANOTHER. OUR
PRESENT DISCUSSION, KHADDAM OBSERVED, CONCERNS THE
NEED TO IMPLEMENT SHTAURA AGREEMENT AND HOW TO FORBID THE
PRESENCE OF ILLEGAL ARMED ELEMENTS IN THE AREA DELIMITED
BY THE AGREEMENT. "IF WE HAVE TO DEAL WITH
EVERY ISRAELI CONCERN, IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO MAKE ANY
PROGRESS." I REPLIED THAT THE FACT IS
THAT NO MISSILES ARE FLYING BETWEEN ISRAEL AND SYRIA
BECAUSE OF DECISIONS OF SARG AND GOI THAT
THEY SHOULD NOT FLY. THE QUESTION IS WHETHER A SIMILAR
DETERMINATION CAN BE IMPLEMENTED IN BEIRUT. KHADDAM
SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THE POINT AND REPLIED HE COULD ONLY
STATE THAT WE ARE TALKING ABOUT SYRIAN VIEWS AND SYRIA'S
BASIC CONVICIONS IS THAT IT MUST AND WILL
DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO HELP SARKIS RECOVER OCCUPIED
LEBANESE TERRITORIES.

10 I ASKED HIM AT THIS POINT IF DAMASCUS CONSIDERS THE
PRESENT CRISIS WILL ALLOW VARIOUS LEBANESE FRACTIONS TO
SUBMERGE THEIR DIFFERENCES AND MOVE AHEAD MORE
READILY IN EXPANDING THE LEBANESE ARMY. KHADDAM REPLIED
THAT SARKIS HAD EARLIER CONCEIVED OF A SERIES OF STEPS ON
HOW TO REALISE A LEBANESE NATIONAL ACCORD INCLUDING
REBUILDING THE LEBANESE ARMY. SARKIS HAD ALREADY TAKEN
CERTAIN DECISION TOWARD IMPLEMENTING THAT GOAL "BUT
THE ISRAELI AGGRESSION HALTED MOVEMENT TOWARDS A LEBANESE
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ACCORD. WE ARE TRYING TO GIVE SARKIS THE CHANCE
TO RESUME HIS ACTIVITIES OF BEHALF OF A NATIONAL ACCORD
INCLUDING RAPID REBUILDING OF LEBANESE INSTITUTIONS
INCLUDING THE ARMY."

11. ON TAKING LEAVE, I ASKED WHETHER SYRIA INTENDED
RESPOND FAVORABLY TO HUSSEN'S CALL FOR A ARAB SUMIT.
HE REPLIED NO DECISION HAD BEEN TAKEN BUT SYRIA
WOULD UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES AGREE
TO MEET WITH SADAT. AS FOR HIS OWN CALL FOR A MEETING
MARCH 19 OF FOREIGN AND DEFENSE MINISTERS FROM THE
"STEAD FAST" FRONT," HE SAID HE HAS AS YET HAD NO
REPLIES TO HIS INVITATIONS. PLANS REMAINED FIRM
FOR ASSAD'S DEPARTURE TO NEW DELHI (KHADDAM WILL ACCOMPANY)

ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, FOR A 5-7 DAY OFFICIAL
VISIT. HE EXPECTED THE DEBATE AT THE UN TO BE OVER
AND THE NECESSARY RESOLUTION TO BE AGREED UPON WELL
BEFORE
MARCH 22. HE HELD HIMSELF AVAILABLE TO
DISCUSS AT ANY TIME OUR FURTHER
THOUGHTS AND ASSERTED SYRIA WELCOMED CONTINUED EXCHANGES
WITH WASHINGTON.

12. COMMENT: KHADDAM SPOKE RAPIDLY WITHOUT NOTES IN A
MANNER INDICATING THAT HE WAS RELAYING AUTHORITATIVE
POSITION I.E. ASSAD'S VIEWS. I HAVE REPORTED HIS
COMMENTS AT LENGTH NOT FOR THEIR INCISIVENESS OR LITERARY
QUALITIES BUT BECUASE THEY USEFULLY INDICATE SOME
OF THE THOUGHT PROCESSES SYRIANS HAVE GONE THROUGH TO ARRIVE
AT ACCEPTANCE OF UN FORCE. FACT I COULD NOT ELICIT
A MORE CATEGORIC STATEMENT ON FUTURE CONTROL OF FEYADEEN
IN THIS PRIVATE EXCHANGE STRONGLY SUGGESTS
IT IS MOST UNLIKELY WE WILL GET ANY MORE CLEARCUT SYRIAN
COMMITMENT IN PUBLIC

13. HE USED THE TERM "OBSERVER FORCE" CONSISTENTLY TO
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DESCRIBE UN OPERATION. SYRIANS ARE ALLERGIC TO LABELS
SUCH AS UNEF AS DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL FROM 1974
NEGOTIATIONS CONCERNING FIRST SYRIAN-ISRAELI DISENGAGEMENT
AGREEMENT. THIS NEED NOT REPEAT NO IN SYRIAN VIEW
RULE OUT A UN FORCE HAVING TEETH. IN ANY EVENT THE
SYRIANS HAVE ACCEPTED CLEAR LEBANESE PREFERENCE FOR A
UN FORCE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, INTERNATIONAL PEACEKEEPING FORCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978DAMASC01521
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780120-1109
Format: TEL
From: DAMASCUS
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780352/aaaabrna.tel
Line Count: 368
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
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Message ID: fda27cc4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 7
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 78 STATE 68716, 78 STATE 68560
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3283730
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOUTH LEBANON: PROPOSED UNSC ACTION ON MIDDLE EAST
TAGS: PEPR, PBOR, IS, LE, SY, XF, UNSC, (KHADDAM, ABD AL-HALIM)
To: STATE USUN NEW YORK
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/fda27cc4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014